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**D.C. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES SMALLPOX VACCINE SUPPLY**  
***Nation's Capital Prepared To Carry Out President Bush's Historic Request***

(Washington, DC) The D.C. Department of Health has received 5,000 doses of smallpox vaccine from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In the coming weeks, the department hopes to inoculate as many as 5,000 health care workers and hospital personnel as part of the District's effort to protect against biological attacks.

"We are not where we were on September 11, 2001," said Mr. James A. Buford, Director, Department of Health. "Many lessons were learned. We have a smallpox plan in place to respond to unforeseen threats that might occur. We take seriously our mission to safeguard the health and welfare of the residents and visitors to the District of Columbia."

"The Department of Health will begin vaccinating public health workers and hospital workers in mid-March, with the second phase beginning 60 to 90 days later," said Senior Deputy Director of Medical Affairs Michael S.A. Richardson, M.D., F.A.C.P. "Over the past months, we have been training vaccinators who will vaccinate our first responders. We have worked diligently to ensure that when clinics begin this voluntary process, our plan will be able to properly administer, and track those who have been vaccinated."

During this first stage, volunteer public health workers and hospital personnel receiving the vaccine will make-up the District's Smallpox Response Team during phase one. If an actual smallpox outbreak should occur, the team in the first stage would respond by either providing vaccine, investigating potential cases, or providing care to those infected. The second stage is expected to include the offering of the smallpox vaccine to other health care providers and first responders.

Smallpox is a contagious, and in some cases, fatal infectious disease caused by the variola virus. The last case of smallpox in United States was recorded in 1949. The last naturally acquired case of smallpox in the world occurred in 1977 in Somalia. Routine smallpox vaccinations in the U.S. stopped in 1972.

For more information, log onto [www.bioterrorism.dc.gov](http://www.bioterrorism.dc.gov) or call the DC Department of Health Call Center at 202-441-9196.

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